

Reading and Talking with Young Children

Things you can do WITH books:

- READ READ READ : Read books, signs, recipes, or lists out loud
- Point out letters in the house or neighborhood. Look for the same letters in your child's name or your name
- Let your child see you reading and tell them you are doing so
 - "I am reading a magazine."
 - "I am reading my email."
 - "I am reading a text from Grandma."
- TALK *with your child as you read.*
 - talk about the pictures and words
 - ask questions about the story
 - connect the story to your child's life
 - ask them to point to a certain picture on a page
 - point to the words as you read them
 - ask your child to show you where to read or to show you the pictures that go with what you read
 - have your child retell the story using the pictures
- You don't always need to read a whole book. If your child loses interest, don't force them to stay, especially if they are very young.
- You don't even need to read the words all the time. It is OK to tell your own story just using the pictures.
- Use the library. It is FREE to get a library card and check out books. You only need an ID with your current address or a piece of mail. You can check out books for you and your child. They also have story times.

Things you can do WITHOUT books:

- TALK TALK TALK TALK: talk to your child as much as you can
 - *Self talk*: talk about what you are doing: "I am washing the dishes. I am going to put the pink plate in the cupboard."
 - *Parallel talk*: talk about what the child is doing: "You are picking up the ball. You threw the ball very far. You look like you are getting hungry."
- Use specific vocabulary. Your child learns words by hearing them spoken. Instead of saying, "Do you see that?" say, "Do you see the brown puppy?" Avoid words like *this, that, those, it* to refer to things.
- It is OK if your child is making mistakes with their speech. Instead of saying "No, you say it like this" rephrase what they said correctly. If a child says, "I goed there" rephrase it and say, "You went there? I went there too."
- When you talk to your child, give them time to answer. This may seem like a long pause to you, but young kids need time to think about their answers.
- Speak to your child how you would normally speak. Whatever dialect or language you use is valid and will help your child learn good language skills.
- Tell stories to your child. Stories you make up or ones you heard when you were growing up are great.
- If kids don't need to use language, they won't. Instead of letting them grab your hand and pull you to the cookie jar, ask them what they want and remind them to use their words.

READING and TALKING with your kids is extremely important. Good speaking skills lead to good vocabulary skills which lead to good reading skills. The earlier you start talking to your kids the better. They learn language by listening to you. The more you talk and the more words you use, the more they will learn. Books help them learn words we don't use everyday.

SPEAK often. READ everyday.